

1

OBSERVATIONS

30-

ON THE Fable AND Composition OF

K I N G J O H N.

THE Troublesome Reign of King John was written in two parts, by W. Shakspeare and W. Rowley, and printed 1611. But the present play is entirely different, and infinitely superior to it. POPE.

The edition of 1611 has no mention of Rowley, nor in the account of Rowley's works is any mention made of his conjunction with Shakspeare in any play. *King John* was reprinted in two parts in 1622. The first edition that I have found of this play in its present form, is that of 1623, in fol. The edition of 1591 I have not seen. JOHNSON.

Dr. Johnson mistakes when he says there is no mention in Rowley's works of any conjunction with Shakspeare: the *Birth of Merlin* is ascribed to them jointly; though I cannot believe Shakspeare had any thing to do with it. Mr. Capel is equally mistaken when he says (pref. p. 15.) that Rowley is called his partner in the title-page of the *Merry Devil of Edmonton*.

There must have been some tradition, however erroneous, upon which Mr. Pope's account was founded; I make no doubt that Rowley wrote the first *King John*: and when

A i j Shakspeare's

Shakspeare's play was called for, and could not be procured from the players, a piratical bookseller reprinted the old one, with W. Sh. in the title-page. FARMER.

The first edition of *The Troublesome Raigne of John King of England, with the Discoverie of King Richard Cordelion's base Son, vulgarly named the Bastard Fawconbridge : also the Death of King John at Swinstead-Abbey*—As it was (sundry Times) publikely acted by the Queen's Majesties Players in the honourable Citie of London.—Imprinted at London for Sampson Clarke, 1591—has no author's name in the title. On the republication in 1611, the printer who inserted the letters W. Sh. in order to conceal his fraud, omitted the words—*publikely*—*in the honourable Citie of London*, which he was aware would proclaim this play not to be Shakspeare's *King John*; the company to which he belonged, having no *publick* theatre in London: that in Black-Friars being a private play-house, and the Globe, which was a publick theatre, being situated in Southwark. He also, probably, with the same view, omitted the following lines addressed *to the Gentlemen Readers*, which are prefixed to the first edition of the old play:

“ You that with friendly grace of smoothed brow
 “ Have entertain'd *the Scythian Tamburlaine*,
 “ And given applause unto an infidel;
 “ Vouchsafe to welcome, with like curtesie,
 “ A warlike Christian and your countryman,
 “ For Christ's true faith indur'd he many a storme,
 “ And set himselfe against the man of *Rome*,
 “ Until base treason by a damned wight
 “ Did all his former triumphs put to flight.

“ Accept

“ Accept of it, sweete gentles, in good sort,
 “ And thinke it was prepar’d for your disport.”

From the mention of *Tamburlaine*, I conjecture that Marlowe was the author of the old *King John*. If it was written by a person of the name of Rowley, it probably was the composition of that “*Maister Rowley*,” whom Meres mentions in his *Wits Treasury*, 1598, as “once a rare scholar of learned Pembroke-Hall, in Cambridge.” W. Rowley was a player in the King’s Company, so late as the year 1625, and can hardly be supposed to have introduced a play thirty-four years before. MALONE.

Hall, Holinshed, Stowe, &c. are closely followed not only in the conduct, but sometimes in the expressions throughout the following historical dramas; viz. *Macbeth*, this play, *Richard II.* *Henry IV.* 2 parts, *Henry V.* *Henry VI.* 3 parts, *Richard III.* and *Henry VIII.*

“A booke called *The Hystorie of Lord Faulconbridge, bastard Son to Richard Cordelion*,” was entered at Stationers’ Hall, Nov. 29. 1614; but I have never met with it, and therefore know not whether it was the old black letter history, or a play on the same subject. For the original *K. John*, see *Six old Plays, on which Shakspeare founded*, &c. published by S. Leacroft, Charing-Cross. STEEVENS.

Though this play hath the title of *The Life and Death of King John*, yet the action of it begins at the thirty-fourth year of his life; and takes in only some transactions of his reign at the time of his demise, being an interval of about seventeen years. THEOBALD.

The tragedy of *King John*, though not written with the utmost power of Shakspeare, is varied with a very pleasing interchange of incidents and characters. The lady’s grief is
 very

very affecting; and the character of the bastard contains that mixture of greatness and levity which this author delighted to exhibit.

JOHNSON.

There is extant another play of *King John*, published in 1611. Shakspeare has preserved the greatest part of the conduct of it, as well as some of the lines. A few of these I have pointed out in the notes, and others I have omitted as undeserving notice. What most inclines me to believe it was the work of some contemporary writer, is the number of quotations from Horace, and similar scraps of learning scattered over it. There is likewise a quantity of rhiming Latin, and ballad-metre, in a scene where the Bastard is represented as plundering a monastery; and some strokes of humour, which seem, from their particular turn, to have been most evidently produced by another hand than that of Shakspeare.

Of this historical drama there is said to have been an edition in 1591 for Sampson Clark, but I have never seen it; and the copy in 1611, which is the oldest I could find, was printed for John Helme, whose name appears before no other of the pieces of Shakspeare. I admitted this play some years ago as our author's own, among the twenty which I published from the old editions; but a more careful perusal of it, and a further conviction of his custom of borrowing plots, sentiments, &c. disposes me to recede from that opinion.

STEEVENS.

st
et
so
ed
co
des
is
as
t
qu
ter
e
ed
chi
ent

ed
as
int
th
ro
fr
fe
nt
nt

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

King John.

By Henry, Earl of Essex.

London, Printed by I. Baskett, at the Sign of the Sun in St. Dunstons Church-yard, 1655.

Price 1s. 6d.

For Sale by the Booksellers.

Printed by I. Baskett.

1655.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

King John.

By Henry, Earl of Essex.

London, Printed by I. Baskett, at the Sign of the Sun in St. Dunstons Church-yard, 1655.

Price 1s. 6d.

For Sale by the Booksellers.

Printed by I. Baskett.

1655.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

King John.

By Henry, Earl of Essex.

London, Printed by I. Baskett, at the Sign of the Sun in St. Dunstons Church-yard, 1655.

Price 1s. 6d.

For Sale by the Booksellers.

Printed by I. Baskett.

1655.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

King John.

By Henry, Earl of Essex.

London, Printed by I. Baskett, at the Sign of the Sun in St. Dunstons Church-yard, 1655.

Price 1s. 6d.

For Sale by the Booksellers.

Dramatis Personae.

MEN.

King JOHN.

Prince HENRY, *Son to the King.*

ARTHUR, *Duke of Bretagne, and Nephew to the King.*

PEMBROKE,

ESSEX,

SALISBURY,

HUBERT,

BIGOT,

FAULCONBRIDGE, *Bastard Son to Richard the First.*

ROBERT FAULCONBRIDGE, *Half Brother to the Bastard.*

JAMES GURNEY, *Servant to the Lady Faulconbridge.*

PETER OF POMFRET, *a Prophet.*

PHILIP, *King of France.*

LEWIS, *the Dauphin.*

Arch-Duke of Austria.

Cardinal PANDULPHO, *the Pope's Legate.*

MELUN, *a French Lord.*

CHATILLON, *Ambassador from France to King John.*

WOMEN.

ELINOR, *Queen Mother of England.*

CONSTANCE, *Mother to Arthur.*

BLANCH, *Daughter to Alphonso King of Castile, and Niece to King John.*

Lady FAULCONBRIDGE, *Mother to the Bastard and Robert Faulconbridge.*

Citizens of Algiers, Herald, Executioners, Messengers, Soldiers, and other Attendants.

The SCENE, sometimes in England; and sometimes in France.



KING JOHN.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Northampton. A Room of State in the Palace. Enter King JOHN, Queen ELINOR, PEMBROKE, ESSEX, and SALISBURY, with CHATILLON.

King John.

N o w, say, Chatillon, what would France with us ?

Chat. Thus, after greeting, speaks the king of France,

In my behaviour, to the majesty,
The borrow'd majesty of England here.

Eli. A strange beginning ;—borrow'd majesty !

K. John. Silence, good mother ; hear the embassy.

Chat. Philip of France, in right and true behalf
Of thy deceased brother Geffrey's son,
Arthur Plantagenet, lays most lawful claim
To this fair island, and the territories ;
To Ireland, Poictiers, Anjou, Touraine, Maine :

B

Desiring

Desiring thee to lay aside the sword,
Which sways usurpingly these several titles ;
And put the same into young Arthur's hand,
Thy nephew, and right royal sovereign.

K. John. What follows, if we disallow of this?

Chat. The proud control of fierce and bloody war,
To enforce these rights so forcibly withheld.

K. John. Here have we war for war, and blood for
blood,

Controlment for controlment ; so answer France. 20

Chat. Then take my king's defiance from my
mouth,

The farthest limit of my embassy.

K. John. Bear mine to him, and so depart in peace:
Be thou as lightning in the eyes of France ;
For ere thou canst report I will be there,
The thunder of my cannon shall be heard :
So, hence ! Be thou the trumpet of our wrath,
And sullen presage of your own decay.—
An honourable conduct let him have ;—
Pembroke, look to't :—Farewel, Chatillon. 30

[*Exeunt* CHAT. and PEM.]

Eli. What now, my son ? have I not ever said,
How that ambitious Constance would not cease,
'Till she had kindled France, and all the world,
Upon the right and party of her son ?
This might have been prevented, and made whole,
With very easy arguments of love ;
Which now the manage of two kingdoms must
With fearful bloody issue arbitrate.

K. John.

K. John. Our strong possession, and our right, for
us.

Eli. Your strong possession, much more than your
right ; 40

Or else it must go wrong with you, and me :
So much my conscience whispers in your ear ;
Which none but heaven, and you, and I, shall hear.

Enter the Sheriff of Northamptonshire, who whispers
Essex.

Essex. My liege, here is the strangest controversy,
Come from the country to be judg'd by you,
That e'er I heard : Shall I produce the men ?

K. John. Let them approach.— [Exit Sheriff.
Our abbies, and our priories, shall pay

Re-enter Sheriff with ROBERT FAULCONBRIDGE, and
Philip, his Brother.

This expedition's charge.—What men are you ?

Phil. Your faithful subject I, a gentleman, 50
Born in Northamptonshire ; and eldest son,
As I suppose, to Robert Faulconbridge ;
A soldier, by the honour-giving hand
Of Cœur-de-lion knighted in the field.

K. John. What art thou ?

Rob. The son and heir to that same Faulconbridge.

K. John. Is that the elder, and art thou the heir ?
You came not of one mother then, it seems.

Phil. Most certain of one mother, mighty king,
That is well known ; and, as I think, one father ;

B i j

But,

+ But, for the certain knowledge of that truth, + 61
 I put you o'er to heaven, and to my mother;
 Of that I doubt, as all men's children may.

Eli. Out on thee, rude man! thou dost shame thy
 mother,

And wound her honour with this diffidence.

Phil. I, madam? no, I have no reason for it;
 That is my brother's plea, and none of mine;
 The which if he can prove, 'a pops me out
 At least from fair five hundred pound a year:
 Heaven guard my mother's honour, and my land!

K. John. A good blunt fellow.—Why, being
 younger born, 71

Doth he lay claim to thine inheritance?

Phil. I know not why, except to get the land.
 But once he slander'd me with bastardy:
 But whe'r I be as true begot, or no,
 That still I lay upon my mother's head;
 But, that I am as well begot, my liege
 (Fair fall the bones that took the pains for me!)
 Compare our faces, and be judge yourself.
 If old Sir Robert did beget us both, 80
 And were our father, and this son like him;—
 O old Sir Robert, father, on my knee
 I give heaven thanks, I was not like to thee.

K. John. Why, what a mad-cap hath heaven lent
 us here!

Eli. He hath a trick of Cœur-de-lion's face, + 85
 The accent of his tongue affecteth him:
 Do you not read some tokens of my son

In the large composition of this man ? 88

K. John. Mine eye hath well examined his parts,
And finds them perfect Richard.—Sirrah, speak,
What doth move you to claim your brother's land ?

Phil. Because he hath a half-face, like my father ;
With that half face would he have all my land : 93
A half-fac'd groat five hundred pound a year !

Rob. My gracious liege, when that my father liv'd,
Your brother did employ my father much.—

Phil. Well, sir, by this you cannot get my land ;
Your tale must be, how he employ'd my mother.

Rob. And once dispatch'd him in an embassy
To Germany, there, with the emperor, 100

To treat of high affairs touching that time :
The advantage of his absence took the king,

And in the mean time sojourn'd at my father's ;

Where how he did prevail, I shame to speak :

But truth is truth ; large lengths of seas and shores

Between my father and my mother lay

(As I have heard my father speak himself),

When this same lusty gentleman was got.

Upon his death-bed he by will bequeath'd

His lands to me ; and took it on his death, 110

That this, my mother's son, was none of his ;

And, if he were, he came into the world

Full fourteen weeks before the course of time.

Then, good my liege, let me have what is mine,

My father's land, as was my father's will.

K. John. Sirrah, your brother is legitimate ;

Your father's wife did after wedlock bear him :

And, if she did play false, the fault was her's ;
 Which fault lies on the hazard of all husbands
 That marry wives. Tell me, how if my brother,
 Who, as you say, took pains to get this son, 121
 Had of your father claim'd this son for his ?

In sooth, good friend, your father might have kept
 This calf, bred from his cow, from all the world ;
 In sooth, he might : then, if he were my brother's,
 My brother might not claim him ; nor your father,

727 + Being none of his, refuse him : This concludes— +
 My mother's son did get your father's heir ;
 Your father's heir must have your father's land.

Rob. Shall then my father's will be of no force,
 To dispossess that child which is not his ? 131

Phil. Of no more force to dispossess me, sir,
 Than was his will to get me, as I think.

Eli. Whether hadst thou rather—be a Faulcon-
 bridge,

And like thy brother, to enjoy thy land ;
 Or the reputed son of Cœur-de-lion,
 Lord of thy presence, and no land beside ? + 137

Phil. Madam, an if my brother had my shape,
 And I had his, Sir Robert his, like him ; + 139
 And if my legs were two such riding-rods, 140
 My arms such eel-skins stuf ; my face so thin, + 141
 That in mine ear I durst not stick a rose, + 142
 Lest men should say, Look, where three-farthings
 goes !

And, to his shape, were heir to all this land,
 'Would I might never stir from off this place,

I'd give it every foot to have this face ;

I would not be Sir Nob in any case. +

147

Eli. I like thee well ; Wilt thou forsake thy fortune,
Bequeath thy land to him, and follow me ?

I am a soldier, and now bound to France. 150

Phil. Brother, take you my land, I'll take my
chance :

Your face hath got five hundred pound a year :

Yet sell your face for five pence, and 'tis dear.—

Madam, I'll follow you unto the death. +

154

Eli. Nay, I would have you go before me thither.

Phil. Our country manners give our betters way.

K. John. What is thy name ?

Phil. Philip, my liege ; so is my name begun ;

Philip, good old Sir Robert's wife's eldest son.

K. John. From henceforth bear his name whose
form thou bear'st : 160

Kneel thou down Philip, but arise more great ;

Arise Sir Richard, and Plantagenet. +

162

Phil. Brother by the mother's side, give me your
hand ;

My father gave me honour, your's gave land :—

Now blessed be the hour, by night or day,

When I was got, Sir Robert was away.

Eli. The very spirit of Plantagenet !—

I am thy grandame, Richard ; call me so.

Phil. Madam, by chance, but not by truth : What
though ? +

169

Something about, a little from the right, 170

In at the window, or else o'er the hatch : +

171

Who

Who dares not stir by day, must walk by night ;
 And have is have, however men do catch :
 Near or far off, well won is still well shot ;
 And I am I, howe'er I was begot.

K. John. Go, Faulconbridge ; now hast thou thy
 desire,

A landless knight makes thee a landed 'squire.—
 Come, madam, and come, Richard ; we must speed
 For France, for France ; for it is more than need.

Phil. Brother, adieu ; Good fortune come to thee,
 For thou wast got i' the way of honesty ! 181

[*Exeunt all but PHILIP.*

A foot of honour better than I was ; + 182
 But many a many foot of land the worse.
 Well, now can I make any Joan a lady :—
Good den, Sir Richard—God-a-mercy, fellow ; + 183
 And if his name be George, I'll call him Peter :
 For new-made honour doth forget men's names ;
 'Tis too respective, and too sociable, + 188
 For your conversing. Now your traveller— + 189
 He and his tooth-pick at my worship's mess ; + 190
 And when my knightly stomach is suffic'd,
 Why then I suck my teeth, and catechise
 My piked man of countries :—*My dear sir* + 193
 (Thus, leaning on my elbow, I begin)
I shall beseech you—That is question now ;
 And then comes answer like an ABC-book :— + 196
O sir, says answer, *at your best command ;*
At your employment ; at your service, sir :—
No, sir, says question ; *I, sweet sir, at your's :*

And

And so, e'er answer knows what question would 200 +
 (Saving in dialogue of compliment ;
 And talking of the Alps, and Apennines,
 The Pyrenean, and the river Pö),
 It draws toward supper in conclusion so.
 But this is worshipful society,
 And fits the mounting spirit, like myself :
 For he is but a bastard to the time,
 That doth not smack of observation
 (And so am I, whether I smack, or no);
 And not alone in habit and device, 210
 Exterior form, outward accoutrement ;
 But from the inward motion to deliver
 Sweet, sweet, sweet poison for the age's tooth :
 Which though I will not practise to deceive, + 214
 Yet, to avoid deceit, I mean to learn ;
 For it shall strew the footsteps of my rising.—
 But who comes in such haste, in riding robes ? + 217
 What woman-post is this ? hath she no husband, 1
 That will take pains to blow a horn before her ? + 219

Enter Lady FAULCONBRIDGE, and JAMES GURNEY.

O me ! it is my mother :—How now, good lady ?
 What brings you here to court so hastily ? 221

Lady. Where is that slave, thy brother ? where is he ?
 That holds in chase mine honour up and down ?

Phil. My brother Robert ? old Sir Robert's son ?
 Colbrand the giant, that same mighty man ? + 225
 Is it Sir Robert's son, that you seek so ?

Lady.

Lady. Sir Robert's son ! Ay, thou unreverend boy,
Sir Robert's son : Why scorn'st thou at Sir Robert ?
He is Sir Robert's son ; and so art thou.

Phil. James Gurney, wilt thou give us leave a
while ? 230

Gur. Good leave, good Philip. + 231

Phil. Philip ?—sparrow !—James, + 232
There's toys abroad ; anon I'll tell thee more. + 233
[Exit JAMES.]

Madam, I was not old Sir Robert's son ;
Sir Robert might have eat his part in me + 235
Upon Good-Friday, and ne'er broke his fast :
Sir Robert could do well ; Marry, to confess !
Could he get me ? Sir Robert could not do it ;
We know his handy-work :—Therefore, good mo-
ther,

To whom am I beholden for these limbs ? 240
Sir Robert never help to make this leg.

Lady. Hast thou conspired with thy brother too,
That for thine own gain should'st defend mine ho-
nour ?

What means this scorn, thou most untoward knave ?

245 + *Phil.* Knight, knight, good mother—Basilisco like :
What ! I am dub'd ; I have it on my shoulder.

But, mother, I am not Sir Robert's son ;
I have disclaim'd Sir Robert, and my land ;
Legitimation, name, and all is gone : 249

Then, good my mother, let me know my father ;
Some proper man, I hope ; Who was it, mother ?

Lady. Hast thou deny'd thyself a Faulconbridge ?

Phil.

Phil. As faithfully as I deny the devil.

Lady. King Richard Cœur-de-lion was thy father;
By long and vehement suit I was seduc'd
To make room for him in my husband's bed:—
Heaven lay not my transgression to my charge!—
Thou art the issue of my dear offence,
Which was so strongly urg'd, past my defence.

Phil. Now, by this light, were I to get again, 260
Madam, I would not wish a better father.

Some sins do bear their privilege on earth, + 262
And so doth your's; your fault was not your folly:
Needs must you lay your heart at his dispose—— + 264
Subjected tribute to commanding love——

Against whose fury and unmatched force
The awless lion could not wage the fight,
Nor keep his princely heart from Richard's hand.
He, that perforce robs lions of their hearts,
May easily win a woman's. Ay, my mother, 270

With all my heart I thank thee for my father!
Who lives and dares but say, thou did'st not well
When I was got, I'll send his soul to hell.

Come, lady, I will shew thee to my kin;

And they shall say, when Richard me begot,
If thou hadst said him nay, it had been sin:

Who says, it was, he lies; I say, 'twas not.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

Before the Walls of Angiers in France. Enter PHILIP King of France, LEWIS the Dauphin, the Arch-Duke of Austria, CONSTANCE, and ARTHUR.

Lewis.

BEFORE Angiers well met, brave Austria.—
 Arthur, that great fore-runner of thy blood,
 Richard, that robb'd the lion of his heart, + 3
 And fought the holy wars in Palestine,
 By this brave duke came early to his grave: + 5
 And, for amends to his posterity,
 At our importance hither is he come, + 7
 To spread his colours, boy, in thy behalf;
 And to rebuke the usurpation
 Of thy unnatural uncle, English John: 10
 Embrace him, love him, give him welcome hither.

Arthur. God shall forgive you Cœur-de-lion's
 death,

The rather, that you give his offspring life,
 Shadowing their right under your wings of war:
 I give you welcome with a powerless hand,
 But with a heart full of unstained love:
 Welcome before the gates of Angiers, duke.

Lewis. A noble boy! Who would not do thee
 right?

Aust. Upon thy cheek lay I this zealous kiss,
 As seal to this indenture of my love;

20
 That

That to my home I will no more return,
 'Till Angiers, and the right thou hast in France,
 Together with that pale, that white-fac'd shore, + 23
 Whose foot spurns back the ocean's roaring tides,
 And coops from other lands her islanders,
 Even 'till that England, hedg'd in with the main,
 That water-walled bulwark, still secure
 And confident from foreign purposes,
 Even 'till that utmost corner of the west,
 Salute thee for her king: 'till then, fair boy, 30
 Will I not think of home, but follow arms.

Const. O, take his mother's thanks, a widow's
 thanks,

'Till your strong hand shall help to give him strength,
 To make a more requital to your love. + 34

Aust. The peace of heaven is theirs, that lift their
 swords

In such a just and charitable war.

K. Phil. Well then, to work; our cannon shall be
 bent

Against the brows of this resisting town.—

Call for our chiefest men of discipline,

To cull the plots of best advantages:— + 40

We'll lay before this town our royal bones,

Wade to the market-place in Frenchmen's blood,

But we will make it subject to this boy.

Const. Stay for an answer to your embassy,

Lest unadvis'd you stain your swords with blood:

My lord Chatillon may from England bring

That right in peace, which here we urge in war;

And then we shall repent each drop of blood,
That hot rash haste so indirectly shed.

Enter CHATILLON.

K. Phil. A wonder, lady !—lo, upon thy wish, + 50
Our messenger Chatillon is arriv'd.—— 51

What England says, say briefly, gentle lord,
We coldly pause for thee ; Chatillon, speak.

Chat. Then turn your forces from this paltry siege,
And stir them up against a mightier task.

England, impatient of your just demands,
Hath put himself in arms ; the adverse winds,
Whose leisure I have staid, have given him time
To land his legions all as soon as I :

His marches are expedient to this town, + 60
His forces strong, his soldiers confident.

With him along is come the mother-queen,
An Até, stirring him to blood and strife ; + 63

With her, her niece, the lady Blanch of Spain ;
With them a bastard of the king deceas'd : + 65

And all the unsettled humours of the land—
Rash, inconsiderate, fiery voluntaries,

With ladies' faces, and fierce dragons' spleens——
Have sold their fortunes at their native homes,

Bearing their birth-rights proudly on their backs, + 70
To make a hazard of new fortunes here.

In brief, a braver choice of dauntless spirits,
Than now the English bottoms have waft o'er, + 73

Did never float upon the swelling tide,
To do offence and scath in Christendom. + 75

The

The interruption of their churlish drums

[*Drums beat.*]

Cuts off more circumstance : they are at hand
To parley, or to fight ; therefore, prepare.

K. Phil. How much unlook'd for is this expedition!

Aust. By how much unexpected, by so much 80
We must awake endeavour for defence ;
For courage mounteth with occasion :
Let them be welcome then, we are prepar'd.

*Enter King JOHN, FAULCONBRIDGE, ELINOR,
BLANCH, PEMBROKE, and others.*

K. John. Peace be to France ; if France in peace
permit

Our just and lineal entrance to our own !
If not ; bleed France, and peace ascend to heaven !
Whiles we, God's wrathful agent, do correct
Their proud contempt that beat his peace to heaven.

K. Phil. Peace be to England ; if that war return
From France to England, there to live in peace ! 90
England we love ; and, for that England's sake,
With burthen of our armour here we sweat :
This toil of ours should be a work of thine ;
But thou from loving England art so far,
That thou hast under-wrought its lawful king, + 95
Cut off the sequence of posterity,
Out-faced infant state, and done a rape
Upon the maiden virtue of the crown.

Look here upon thy brother Geffrey's face ;—

These eyes, these brows, were moulded out of his :
 This little abstract doth contain that large, 101
 Which dy'd in Geffrey ; and the hand of time
 Shall draw this brief into as huge a volume.
 That Geffrey was thy elder brother born,
 And this his son ; England was Geffrey's right,
 And this is Geffrey's : In the name of God,
 How comes it then, that thou art call'd a king,
 When living blood doth in these temples beat,
 Which owe the crown that thou o'er-masterest ?

K. John. From whom hast thou this great commis-
 sion, France, 110

To draw my answer from thy articles ?

K. Phil. From that supernal judge, that stirs good
 thoughts

In any breast of strong authority,
 To look into the blots and stains of right. 114
 That judge hath made me guardian to this boy :
 Under whose warrant, I impeach thy wrong ;
 And, by whose help, I mean to chastise it.

K. John. Alack, thou dost usurp authority.

K. Phil. Excuse it ; 'tis to beat usurping down.

Eli. Who is it, thou dost call usurper, France ? 120

Const. Let me make answer ;—Thy usurping son.

Eli. Out, insolent ! thy bastard shall be king ;
 That thou may'st be a queen, and check the world !

Const. My bed was ever to thy son as true,
 As thine was to thy husband : and this boy
 Liker in feature to his father Geffrey,
 Than thou and John in manners ; being as like,

As

As rain to water, or devil to his dam.
My boy a bastard! By my soul, I think,
His father never was so true begot; 130
It cannot be, an if thou wert his mother.

Eli. There's a good mother, boy, that blots thy
father.

Const. There's a good grandam, boy, that would
blot thee.

Aust. Peace!

Faulc. Hear the crier.

Aust. What the devil art thou?

Faulc. One that will play the devil, sir, with you,
An a' may catch your hide and you alone.

You are the hare of whom the proverb goes, 139
Whose valour plucks dead lions by the beard; 140

I'll smoke your skin-coat, an I catch you right;
Sirrah, look to't; i'faith, I will, i'faith.

Blanch. O, well did he become that lion's robe,
That did disrobe the lion of that robe!

Faulc. It lies as sightly on the back of him, 145
As great Alcides' shoes upon an ass:—

But, ass, I'll take that burden from your back;
Or lay on that, shall make your shoulders crack.

Aust. What cracker is this same, that deafs our ears
With this abundance of superfluous breath? 150

King Lewis, determine what we shall do straight. 154

K. Phil. Women, and fools, break off your con-
ference.—

King John, this is the very sum of all—

England, and Ireland, Anjou, Touraine, Maine,

The canon of the law is laid on him,
Being but the second generation
Removed from thy sin-conceiving womb.

K. John. Bedlam, have done.

Const. I have but this to say—

That he's not only plagued for her sin,
But God hath made her sin and her the plague 190
On this removed issue, plagu'd for her,
And with her.—Plague her son; his injury,
Her injury, the beadle to her sins,
All punish'd in the person of this child,
And all for her; A plague upon her!

Eli. Thou unadvised scold, I can produce
A will, that bars the title of thy son.

Const. Ay, who doubts that? a will! a wicked
will;

A woman's will; a cankred grandam's will!

K. Phil. Peace, lady; pause, or be more temperate:
It ill beseems this presence, to cry aim 201
To these ill-tuned repetitions.—

Some trumpet summon hither to the walls
These men of Angiers; let us hear them speak,
Whose title they admit, Arthur's, or John's.

[*Trumpets sound.*]

Enter Citizens upon the Walls.

1 *Cit.* Who is it, that hath warn'd us to the walls?

K. Phil. 'Tis France, for England.

K. John. England, for itself:

You men of Angiers, and my loving subjects—

K. Phil.

K. Phil. You loving men of Angiers, Arthur's subjects,
jects, 210

Our trumpet call'd you to this gentle parle.

K. John. For our advantage;—Therefore, hear us
first.— + 212

These flags of France, that are advanced here
Before the eye and prospect of your town,
Have hither march'd to your endamagement :
The cannons have their bowels full of wrath ;
And ready mounted are they, to spit forth
Their iron indignation 'gainst your walls :
All preparation for a bloody siege,
And merciless proceeding by these French, 220
Confronts your city's eyes, your winking gates ; + 221
And, but for our approach, those sleeping stones,
That as a waist do girdle you about,
By the compulsion of their ordnance
By this time from their fixed beds of lime
Had been dishabited, and wide havock made
For bloody power to rush upon your peace.
But, on the sight of us, your lawful king——
Who, painfully, with much expedient march,
Have brought a countercheck before your gates, 230
To save unscratch'd your city's threaten'd cheeks—
Behold, the French, amaz'd, vouchsafe a parle :
And now, instead of bullets wrap'd in fire,
To make a shaking fever in your walls,
They shoot but calm words, folded up in smoke,
To make a faithless error in your ears :
Which trust accordingly, kind citizens,

And

In dreadful trial of our kingdom's king !

K. Phil. Amen, Amen !— Mount, chevaliers ! to arms !

Faulc. Saint George—that swing'd the dragon, and e'er since,

Sits on his horseback at mine hostess' door,

Teach us some fence !—Sirrah, were I at home,

At your den, sirrah, with your lioness,

I'd set an ox-head to your lion's hide,

And make a monster of you.—

[To AUSTRIA.

Aust. Peace ; no more.

300

Faulc. O, tremble ! for you hear the lion roar.

K. John. Up higher to the plain ; where we'll set forth,

In best appointment, all our regiments.

Faulc. Speed then, to take advantage of the field.

K. Phil. It shall be so ;—and at the other hill

Command the rest to stand.—God, and our right !

[Exeunt.

SCENE II.

After Excursions, enter the Herald of France, with Trumpets, to the Gates.

F. Her. You men of Angiers, open wide your gates,
And let young Arthur, duke of Bretagne, in ;
Who, by the hand of France, this day hath made
Much work for tears in many an English mother, 310

Whose

Whose sons lie scatter'd on the bleeding ground :
 Many a widow's husband groveling lies,
 Coldly embracing the discolour'd earth ;
 And victory, with little loss, doth play
 Upon the dancing banners of the French ;
 Who are at hand, triumphantly display'd,
 To enter conquerors, and to proclaim
 Arthur of Bretagne, England's king, and yours.

Enter English Herald, with Trumpets.

319 + *E. Her.* Rejoice, you men of Angiers, ring your
 bells ;

King John, your king and England's, doth approach,
 Commander of this hot malicious day ! 321

Their armours, that march'd hence so silver-bright,
 Hither return all gilt with Frenchmen's blood ;

There stuck no plume in any English crest,
 That is removed by a staff of France ;

Our colours do return in those same hands

That did display them when we first march'd forth ;

And, like a jolly troop of huntsmen, come + 328

Our lusty English, all with purpled hands,

Dy'd in the dying slaughter of their foes : 330

Open your gates, and give the victors way.

331 + *Cit.* Heralds, from off our towers we might behold, +

From first to last, the onset and retire

Of both your armies ; whose equality

By our best eyes cannot be censured :

Blood hath bought blood, and blows have answer'd
 blows ;

Strength

Strength match'd with strength, and power confronted
power :

Both are alike ; and both alike we like.

One must prove greatest : while they weigh so even,
We hold our town for neither ; yet for both. 340

Enter the two Kings with their Powers, at several Doors.

K. John. France, hast thou yet more blood to cast
away ?

Say, shall the current of our right run on ? + 342
Whose passage vext with thy impediment,
Shall leave his native channel, and o'er-swell .
With course disturb'd even thy confining shores ;
Unless thou let his silver water keep
A peaceful progress to the ocean.

K. Phil. England, thou hast not sav'd one drop
of blood,

In this hot trial, more than we of France ;
Rather, lost more : And by this hand I swear, 350
'That sways the earth this climate overlooks—
Before we will lay down by our just-borne arms,
We'll put thee down, 'gainst whom these arms we
bear,

Or add a royal number to the dead ;
Gracing the scroll, that tells of this war's loss,
With slaughter coupled to the name of kings.

Faulc. Ha, majesty ! how high thy glory towers,
When the rich blood of kings is set on fire !
Oh, now doth death line his dead chaps with steel ;
The swords of soldiers are his teeth, his phangs ; 360

And now he feasts, mouthing the flesh of men, + 364
In undetermin'd differences of kings.—

Why stand these royal fronts amazed thus?

Cry, havock, kings! back to the stained field, + 364

You equal potents, fiery-kindled spirits! + 365

Then let confusion of one part confirm

The other's peace; 'till then, blows, blood, and
death!

K. John. Whose party do the townsmen yet admit?

K. Phil. Speak, citizens, for England; who's
your king?

Cit. The king of England, when we know the king.

K. Phil. Know him in us, that here hold up his
right. 371

K. John. In us, that are our own great deputy,
And bear possession of our person here;
Lord of our presence, Angiers, and of you.

Cit. A greater power, than ye, denies all this; + 375
And, 'till it be undoubted, we do lock
Our former scruple in our strong-barr'd gates:
King'd of our fears; until our fears, resolv'd,
Be by some certain king purg'd and depos'd.

Faulc. By heaven, these scroyles of Angiers flout
you, kings; + 380

And stand securely on their battlements,
As in a theatre, whence they gape and point
At your industrious scenes and acts of death. + 383
Your royal presences be rul'd by me;
Do like the mutines of Jerusalem,
Be friends a while, and both conjointly bend + 386

Your

Your sharpest deeds of malice on this town :
 By east and west let France and England mount
 Their battering cannon, charged to the mouths ;
 'Till their soul-fearing clamours have brawl'd down + 390
 The flinty ribs of this contemptuous city : 391
 I'd play incessantly upon these jades,
 Even 'till unfenced desolation
 Leave them as naked as the vulgar air.
 That done, dissever your united strengths,
 And part your mingled colours once again ;
 Turn face to face, and bloody point to point :
 Then, in a moment, fortune shall cull forth
 Out of one side her happy minion ;
 To whom in favour she shall give the day, 400
 And kiss him with a glorious victory.
 How like you this wild counsel, mighty states ?
 Smacks it not something of the policy ?

K. John. Now, by the sky that hangs above our
 heads,

I like it well :—France, shall we knit our powers,
 And lay this Angiers even with the ground ;
 Then, after, fight who shall be king of it ?

Faulc. An if thou hast the mettle of a king—
 Being wrong'd, as we are, by this peevish town—
 Turn thou the mouth of thy artillery, 410
 As we will ours, against these saucy walls :
 And when that we have dash'd them to the ground,
 Why, then defy each other ; and, pell-mell,
 Make work upon ourselves, for heaven, or hell.

K. Phil. Let it be so : Say, where will you assault ?

K. John. We from the west will send destruction
Into this city's bosom.

Aust. I from the north.

K. Phil. Our thunder from the south,
Shall rain their drift of bullets on this town. 420

Faulc. O prudent discipline! From north to south;
Austria and France shoot in each other's mouth:

[*Aside.*

I'll stir them to it: Come, away, away!

Cit. Hear us, great kings: vouchsafe a while to
stay,

And I shall shew you peace, and fair-fac'd league;
Win you this city without stroke or wound;
Rescue those breathing lives to die in beds,
That here come sacrifices for the field:
Persever not, but hear me, mighty kings.

K. John. Speak on, with favour; we are bent to
hear. 430

431 + *Cit.* That daughter there of Spain, the lady Blanch, +
Is near to England; Look upon the years
Of Lewis the dauphin, and that lovely maid:
If lusty love should go in quest of beauty,
Where should he find it fairer than in Blanch?
If zealous love should go in search of virtue, + 436
Where should he find it purer than in Blanch?
If love ambitious sought a match of birth,
Whose veins bound richer blood than lady Blanch?
Such as she is, in beauty, virtue, birth, 440
Is the young dauphin every way complete:
If not complete, oh say, he is not she;

And

And she again wants nothing, to name want,
If want it be not, that she is not he :

He is the half part of a blessed man, +
Left to be finished by such a she ;

And she a fair divided excellence,
Whose fulness of perfection lies in him.

Oh, two such silver currents, when they join,
Do glorify the banks that bound them in : 450

And two such shores to two such streams made one,
Two such controlling bounds shall you be, kings,
To these two princes, if you marry them.

This union shall do more than battery can,
To our fast-closed gates ; for, at this match, + 455
With swifter spleen than powder can enforce,
The mouth of passage shall we fling wide ope,
And give you entrance : but, without this match,
The sea enraged is not half so deaf,

Lions more confident, mountains and rocks 460
More free from motion ; no, not death himself
In mortal fury half so peremptory,
As we to keep this city.

Faulc. Here's a stay, + 464

That shakes the rotten carcass of old death
Out of his rags ! Here's a large mouth, indeed,
That spits forth death, and mountains, rocks, and
seas ;

Talks as familiarly of roaring lions,
As maids of thirteen do of puppy-dogs !
What cannoneer begot this lusty blood ? 470
He speaks plain cannon, fire, and smoke, and bounce ;

D i i j

He

He gives the bastinado with his tongue;
 Our ears are cudgel'd; not a word of his,
 But buffets better than a fist of France:
 Zounds! I was never so bethumpt with words,
 Since I first call'd my brother's father, dad.

Eli. Son, list to this conjunction, make this match;
 Give with our niece a dowry large enough:
 For by this knot thou shalt so surely tie
 Thy now unsur'd assurance to the crown, 480
 That yon green boy shall have no sun to ripe
 The bloom that promiseth a mighty fruit.
 I see a yielding in the looks of France;
 Mark, how they whisper: urge them, while their
 souls

Are capable of this ambition; 486
 Lest zeal, now melted, by the windy breath
 Of soft petitions, pity, and remorse,
 Cool and congeal again to what it was.

Cit. Why answer not the double majesties
 This friendly treaty of our threaten'd town? 490

K. Phil. Speak England first, that hath been for-
 ward first

To speak unto this city: What say you?

K. John. If that the dauphin there, thy princely son,
 Can in this book of beauty read, I love,
 Her dowry shall weigh equal with a queen:
 For Anjou, and fair Touraine, Maine, Poictiers, + 496
 And all that we upon this side the sea
 (Except this city now by us besieg'd)
 Find liable to our crown and dignity,
 Shall gild her bridal bed; and make her rich 500

So tell the pope ; all reverence set apart,
To him, and his usurp'd authority.

K. Phil. Brother of England, you blaspheme in this.

K. John. Though you, and all the kings of Christ-
endom,

Are led so grossly by this meddling priest,
Dreading the curse that money may buy out ;
And, by the merit of vile gold, dross, dust,
Purchase corrupted pardon of a man,
Who, in that sale, sells pardon from himself :
Though you, and all the rest, so grossly led, 170
This juggling witchcraft with revenue cherish ;
Yet I, alone, alone do me oppose
Against the pope, and count his friends my foes.

Pand. Then, by the lawful power that I have,
Thou shalt stand curst, and excommunicate :
And blessed shall he be, that doth revolt
From his allegiance to an heretick ;
And meritorious shall that hand be call'd,
Canoniz'd, and worship'd as a saint,
That takes away by any secret course + 180
Thy hateful life.

Const. O, lawful let it be,
That I have room with Rome to curse a while !
Good father cardinal, cry thou, amen,
To my keen curses ; for, without my wrong,
There is no tongue hath power to curse him right.

Pand. There's law and warrant, lady, for my curse.

Const. And for mine too ; when law can do no right,
Let it be lawful, that law bar no wrong :

*Oh that these hands could so redeem my son,
As they have given these hairs their liberty!
But now I envy at their liberty,
And will again commit them to their bonds,
Because my poor child is a prisoner.—
And, father cardinal, I have heard you say,
That we shall see and know our friends in heaven :
If that be true, I shall see my boy again ;
For, since the birth of Cain, the first male-child,
To him that did but yesterday suspire, + 530
There was not such a gracious creature born. + 531
But now will canker sorrow eat my bud,
And chase the native beauty from his cheek,
And he will look as hollow as a ghost ;
As dim and meagre as an ague's fit ;
And so he'll die ; and, rising so again,
When I shall meet him in the court of heaven
I shall not know him : therefore never, never
Must I behold my pretty Arthur more.*

Pand. You hold too heinous a respect of grief. 540

Const. He talks to me, that never had a son.

K. Phil. You are as fond of grief, as of your child.

Const. Grief fills the room up of my absent child, + 543
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me ;
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form ;
Then, have I reason to be fond of grief ?
Fare you well : had you such a loss as I, + 549
I could give better comfort than you do.— 550

I will

I will not keep this form upon my head,

[*Tearing off her Head-Dress.*]

When there is such disorder in my wit.

O Lord! my boy, my Arthur, my fair son!

My life, my joy, my food, my all the world!

My widow-comfort, and my sorrows' cure! [Exit,

K. Phil. I fear some outrage, and I'll follow her.

[Exit,

Lewis. There's nothing in this world can make
me joy: 557

Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale,

Vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man;

559

And bitter shame hath spoil'd the sweet world's taste,

That it yields nought, but shame, and bitterness.

Pand. Before the curing of a strong disease,

Even in the instant of repair and health,

The fit is strongest; evils, that take leave,

On their departure most of all shew evil:

What have you lost by losing of this day?

Lewis. All days of glory, joy, and happiness.

Pand. If you had won it, certainly, you had.

No, no: when fortune means to men most good,

She looks upon them with a threatening eye.

570

'Tis strange, to think how much king John hath lost

In this which he accounts so clearly won:

Are not you griev'd, that Arthur is his prisoner?

Lewis. As heartily, as he is glad he hath him.

Pand. Your mind is all as youthful as your blood.

Now hear me speak, with a prophetic spirit;

For even the breath of what I mean to speak

Shall

Shall blow each dust, each straw, each little rub,
 Out of the path which shall directly lead
 Thy foot to England's throne; and, therefore, mark.
 John hath seiz'd Arthur; and it cannot be, 581
 That, whiles warm life plays in that infant's veins,
 The mis-plac'd John should entertain an hour,
 One minute, nay, one quiet breath of rest:
 A sceptre, snatch'd with an unruly hand,
 Must be as boisterously maintain'd as gain'd:
 And he, that stands upon a slippery place,
 Makes nice of no vile hold to stay him up:
 That John may stand, then Arthur needs must fall;
 So be it, for it cannot be but so. 590

Lewis. But what shall I gain by young Arthur's fall?

Pand. You, in the right of lady Blanch your wife,
 May then make all the claim that Arthur did.

Lewis. And lose it, life and all, as Arthur did.

Pand. How green you are, and fresh in this old
 world! 595

John lays you plots; the times conspire with you:
 For he, that steeps his safety in true blood, + 597
 Shall find but bloody safety, and untrue.

This act, so evilly born, shall cool the hearts
 Of all his people, and freeze up their zeal; 600

That none so small advantage shall step forth,
 To check his reign, but they will cherish it:

No natural exhalation in the sky,

No scape of nature, no distemper'd day, + 604

No common wind, no custom'd event,

But they will pluck away his natural cause,

And

And call them meteors, prodigies, and signs,
Abortives, presages, and tongues of heaven,
Plainly denouncing vengeance upon John.

Lewis. May be, he will not touch young Arthur's
life, 610

But hold himself safe in his prisonment.

Pand. O, sir, when he shall hear of your approach,
If that young Arthur be not gone already,
Even at that news he dies: and then the hearts
Of all his people shall revolt from him,
And kiss the lips of unacquainted change;
And pick strong matter of revolt, and wrath,
Out of the bloody fingers' ends of John.

Methinks, I see this hurly all on foot;
And, O, what better matter breeds for you, 620
Than I have nam'd!—The bastard Faulconbridge
Is now in England, ransacking the church,
Offending charity: If but a dozen French
Were there in arms, they would be as a call 624
To train ten thousand English to their side;
Or, as a little snow, tumbled about, 626
Anon becomes a mountain. O noble dauphin,
Go with me to the king: 'Tis wonderful,
What may be wrought out of their discontent:
Now that their souls are top-full of offence, 630
For England go; I will whet on the king.

Lewis. Strong reasons make strong actions: Let
us go; 632

If you say, Ay, the king will not say, No. [Exeunt.]

I should be as merry as the day is long;
 And so I would be here, but that I doubt
 My uncle practises more harm to me:
 He is afraid of me, and I of him:
 Is it my fault that I was Geffrey's son?
 No, indeed, is't not; And I would to heaven,
 I were your son, so you would love me, Hubert.

Hub. If I talk to him, with his innocent prate
 He will awake my mercy, which lies dead:
 Therefore I will be sudden, and dispatch. [*Aside.*

Arth. Are you sick, Hubert? you look pale to-day:

In sooth, I would you were a little sick;
 That I might sit all night, and watch with you:
 I warrant, I love you more than you do me.

Hub. His words do take possession of my bosom.—
 Read here, young Arthur—— [*Shewing a Paper.*
 How now, foolish rheum! [*Aside.*
 Turning dispiteous torture out of door?
 I must be brief; lest resolution drop
 Out at mine eyes, in tender womanish tears.—
 Can you not read it? is it not fair writ?

Arth. Too fairly, Hubert, for so foul effect:
 Must you with hot irons burn out both mine eyes?

Hub. Young boy, I must.

Arth. And will you?

Hub. And I will.

Arth. Have you the heart? When your head did
 but ake,
 I knit my handkerchief about your brows

(The

Sal. It is apparent foul-play; and 'tis shame,
That greatness should so grossly offer it:—
So thrive it in your game! and so farewell.

Pemb. Stay yet, lord Salisbury; I'll go with thee,
And find the inheritance of this poor child,
His little kingdom of a forced grave.
That blood, which ow'd the breadth of all this isle,
Three foot of it doth hold; Bad world the while!
This must not be thus borne: this will break out
To all our sorrows, and ere long, I doubt. [*Exeunt.*]

K. John. They burn in indignation; I repent:
There is no sure foundation set on blood;
No certain life achiev'd by others' death.—

Enter a Messenger.

A fearful eye thou hast; Where is that blood, 250
That I have seen inhabit in those cheeks?
So foul a sky clears not without a storm:
Pour down thy weather:—How goes all in France?

Mes. From France to England.—Never such a
power + 254
For any foreign preparation,
Was levy'd in the body of a land!
The copy of your speed is learn'd by them;
For, when you should be told they do prepare,
The tidings come, that they are all arriv'd.

K. John. O, where hath our intelligence been
drunk? + 260
Where hath it slept? Where is my mother's care?
That such an army could be drawn in France,

And

And she not hear of it?

Mes. My liege, her ear

Is stopt with dust: the first of April, dy'd

Your noble mother: And, as I hear, my lord,

The lady Constance in a frenzy dy'd

Three days before: but this from rumour's tongue

I idly heard; if true, or false, I know not.

K. John. Withhold thy speed, dreadful occasion!

O, make a league with me, 'till I have pleas'd 271

My discontented peers!—What! mother dead?

How wildly then walks my estate in France?—

Under whose conduct came those powers of France,

That, thou for truth giv'st out, are landed here?

Mes. Under the Dauphin.

Enter FAULCONBRIDGE and PETER OF POMFRET.

K. John. Thou hast made me giddy

With these ill tidings.—Now, what says the world

To your proceedings? do not seek to stuff

My head with more ill news, for it is full. 280

Faul. But, if you be afeard to hear the worst,

Then let the worst, unheard, fall on your head.

K. John. Bear with me, cousin; for I was amaz'd

Under the tide: but now I breathe again

Aloft the flood; and can give audience

To any tongue, speak it of what it will,

Faulc. How I have sped among the clergymen,

The sums I have collected shall express.

But, as I travell'd hither through the land,

I find the people strangely fantasy'd;

290

Possess'd

Possess'd with rumours, full of idle dreams ;
 Not knowing what they fear, but full of fear :
 And here's a prophet, that I brought with me
 From forth the streets of Pomfret, whom I found
 With many hundreds treading on his heels ;
 To whom he sung, in rude harsh-sounding rhimes,
 That, ere the next Ascension-day at noon,
 Your highness should deliver up your crown.

K. John. Thou idle dreamer, wherefore did'st thou
 say so ? 299

Peter. Fore-knowing that the truth will fall out so,

K. John. Hubert, away with him ; imprison him ;
 And on that day at noon, whereon, he says,
 I shall yield up my crown, let him be hang'd :
 Deliver him to safety, and return, 304
 For I must use thee,—O my gentle cousin,

[*Exit HUBERT, with PETER.*

Hear'st thou the news abroad, who are arriv'd ?

Faulc. The French, my lord ; men's mouths are
 full of it :

Besides, I met lord Bigot, and lord Salisbury
 (With eyes as red as new-enkindled fire),
 And others more, going to seek the grave 310
 Of Arthur, who, they say, is kill'd to-night
 On your suggestion.

K. John. Gentle kinsman, go,
 And thrust thyself into their companies :
 I have a way to win their loves again ;
 Bring them before me.

Faulc. I will seek them out.

K. John.

K. John. Nay, but make haste ; the better foot before.—

O, let me have no subject enemies,
When adverse foreigners affright my towns 320
With dreadful pomp of stout invasion!—
Be Mercury, set feathers to thy heels ;
And fly, like thought, from them to me again.

Faulc. The spirit of the time shall teach me speed.
[Exit.

K. John. Spoke like a sprightful noble gentleman.
Go after him ; for he, perhaps, shall need
Some messenger betwixt me and the peers ;
And be thou he.

Mes. With all my heart, my liege. [Exit.

K. John. My mother dead ! 330

Re-enter HUBERT.

Hub. My lord, they say, five moons were seen to-
night :

Four fixed ; and the fifth did whirl about
The other four, in wondrous motion.

K. John. Five moons !

Hub. Old men, and beldams, in the streets
Do prophesy upon it dangerously :

Young Arthur's death is common in their mouths ;
And when they talk of him, they shake their heads,
And whisper one another in the ear ;

And he, that speaks, doth gripe the hearer's wrist ;
Whilst he, that hears, makes fearful action 344

With wrinkled brows, with nods, with rolling eyes.

I saw a smith stand with his hammer, thus,
 The whilst his iron did on the anvil cool,
 With open mouth swallowing a tailor's news;
 Who, with his shears and measure in his hand,
 Standing on slippers (which his nimble haste [†] 347
 Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet)
 Told of a many thousand warlike French,
 That were embattled and rank'd in Kent: 350
 Another lean unwash'd artificer
 Cuts off his tale, and talks of Arthur's death.

K. John. Why seek'st thou to possess me with these
 fears?

Why urgest thou so oft young Arthur's death?
 Thy hand hath murder'd him: I had a mighty cause
 To wish him dead, but thou hadst none to kill him.

Hub. Had none, my lord! why, did not you pro-
 voke me?

354 [†] *K. John.* It is the curse of kings, to be attended [†]
 By slaves, that take their humours for a warrant
 To break within the bloody house of life: 360
 And, on the winking of authority,
 To understand a law; to know the meaning
 Of dangerous majesty, when, perchance, it frowns
 More upon humour than advis'd respect.

Hub. Here is your hand and seal for what I did.

K. John. Oh, when the last account 'twixt heaven
 and earth

Is to be made, then shall this hand and seal
 Witness against us to damnation!
 How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds,

Makes

There's few, or none, do know me ; if they did,
This ship-boy's semblance hath disguis'd me quite.
I am afraid ; and yet I'll venture it.
If I get down, and do not break my limbs,
I'll find a thousand shifts to get away :
As good to die, and go, as die, and stay.

[*Leaps down.*

Oh me ! my uncle's spirit is in these stones :—
Heaven take my soul, and England keep my bones !
[*Dies.*

Enter PEMBROKE, SALISBURY, and BIGOT.

Sal. Lords, I will meet him at saint Edmund's-
Bury ;

It is our safety, and we must embrace 431
This gentle offer of the perilous time.

Pemb. Who brought that letter from the cardinal ?

Sal. The count Melun, a noble lord of France ;
Whose private with me, of the Dauphin's love, 435
Is much more general than these lines import.

Bigot. To-morrow morning let us meet him then.

Sal. Or, rather, then set forward : for 'twill be
Two long days journey, lords, or e'er we meet. + 439

Enter FAULCONBRIDGE.

Faulc. Once more to-day well met, distemper'd
lords ! 440

The king, by me, requests your presence straight.

Sal. The king hath dispossess'd himself of us ;
We will not line his thin bestained cloak

Hij

With

Hub. I am no villain.

Sal. Must I rob the law? [*Drawing his Sword.*]

Faulc. Your sword is bright, sir; put it up again.

Sal. Not 'till I sheath it in a murderer's skin. 500

Hub. Stand back, lord Salisbury, stand back, I say;
By heaven, I think, my sword's as sharp as your's:
I would not have you, lord, forget yourself,
Nor tempt the danger of my true defence; + 504
Lest I, by marking of your rage, forget
Your worth, your greatness, and nobility.

Bigot. Out, dunghill! dar'st thou brave a noble-
man?

Hub. Not for my life: but yet I dare defend
My innocent life against an emperor.

Sal. Thou art a murderer. 510

Hub. Do not prove me so; + 511
Yet, I am none: Whose tongue soe'er speaks false,
Not truly speaks; who speaks not truly, lies.

Pemb. Cut him to pieces.

Faulc. Keep the peace, I say.

Sal. Stand by, or I shall gaul you, Faulconbridge.

Faulc. Thou wert better gaul the devil, Salisbury:
If thou but frown on me, or stir thy foot,
Or teach thy hasty spleen to do me shame,
I'll strike thee dead. Put up thy sword betime; 520
Or I'll so maul you and your toasting-iron, + 521
That you shall think the devil is come from hell.

Bigot. What wilt thou do, renowned Faulcon-
bridge?

Second a villain, and a murderer?

And, if thou want'st a cord, the smallest thread
 That ever spider twisted from her womb
 Will serve to strangle thee ; a rush will be a beam
 To hang thee on : or, would'st thou drown thyself,
 Put but a little water in a spoon,
 And it shall be as all the ocean,
 Enough to stifle such a villain up.—
 I do suspect thee very grievously.

Hub. If I in act, consent, or sin of thought, 560
 Be guilty of the stealing that sweet breath
 Which was embounded in this beauteous clay,
 Let hell want pains enough to torture me !
 I left him well.

Faulc. Go, bear him in thine arms.—
 I am amaz'd, methinks ; and lose my way
 Among the thorns and dangers of this world.—
 How easy dost thou take all England up !
 From forth this morsel of dead royalty,
 The life, the right, and truth of all this realm 570
 Is fled to heaven ; and England now is left
 To tug, and scramble, and to part by the teeth
 The un-owed interest of proud-swelling state. + 573
 Now, for the bare-pick'd bone of majesty,
 Doth dogged war bristle his angry crest,
 And snarleth in the gentle eyes of peace :
 Now powers from home, and discontents at home,
 Meet in one line ; and vast confusion waits
 (As doth a raven on a sick-fallen beast)
 The imminent decay of wrested pomp. + 580
 Now happy he, whose cloak and cincture can + 581
 Hold

And on our actions set the name of right,
With holy breath.

Pand. Hail, noble prince of France! 150
The next is this—king John hath reconcil'd
Himself to Rome; his spirit is come in,
That so stood out against the holy church,
The great metropolis and see of Rome:
Therefore thy threat'ning colours now wind up,
And tame the savage spirit of wild war;
That, like a lion foster'd up at hand,
It may lie gently at the foot of peace,
And be no further harmful than in shew.

Lewis. Your grace shall pardon me, I will not
back; 160
I am too high-born to be property'd,
To be a secondary at control,
Or useful serving-man, and instrument,
To any sovereign state throughout the world.
Your breath first kindled the dead coal of wars
Between this chastis'd kingdom and myself,
And brought in matter that should feed this fire;
And now 'tis far too huge to be blown out
With that same weak wind which enkindled it.
You taught me how to know the face of right, 170
Acquainted me with interest to this land,
Yea, thrust this enterprize into my heart;
And come ye now to tell me, John hath made
His peace with Rome? What is that peace to me?
I, by the honour of my marriage-bed,
After young Arthur, claim this land for mine;

I i j

And,

And, now it is half-conquer'd, must I back,
 Because that John hath made his peace with Rome?
 Am I Rome's slave? What penny hath Rome borne,
 What men provided, what munition sent, 180
 To underprop this action? is't not I,
 That undergo this charge? who else but I,
 And such as to my claim are liable,
 Sweat in this business, and maintain this war?
 Have I not heard these islanders shout out,
Vive le roy! as I have bank'd their towns? + 186
 Have I not here the best cards for the game,
 To win this easy match play'd for a crown?
 And shall I now give o'er the yielded set?
 No, no, on my soul, it never shall be said. 190

Pand. You look but on the outside of this work.

Lewis. Outside or inside, I will not return
 'Till my attempt so much be glorify'd
 As to my ample hope was promised
 Before I drew this gallant head of war,
 And cull'd these fiery spirits from the world,
 To out-look conquest, and to win renown
 Even in the jaws of danger and of death.—

[*Trumpet sounds.*]

What lusty trumpet thus doth summon us?

Enter FAULCONBRIDGE, attended.

Faulc. According to the fair-play of the world,
 Let me have audience; I am sent to speak:— 201
 My holy lord of Milan, from the king
 I come, to learn how you have dealt for him;

And,

K. John. Ah me! this tyrant fever burns me up,
 And will not let me welcome this good news.—
 Set on toward Swinstead: to my litter straight; 280
 Weakness possesseth me, and I am faint. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

*The French Camp. Enter SALISBURY, PEMBROKE,
 and BIGOT.*

Sal. I did not think the king so stor'd with friends.

Pemb. Up once again; put spirit in the French;
 If they miscarry, we miscarry too.

Sal. That misbegotten devil, Faulconbridge,
 In spite of spight, alone upholds the day.

Pemb. They say, king John, sore sick, hath left
 the field.

Enter MELUN wounded, and led by Soldiers.

Melun. Lead me to the revolts of England here.

Sal. When we were happy, we had other names.

Pemb. It is the count Melun. 290

Sal. Wounded to death.

Melun. Fly, noble English, you are bought and sold?
 Unthread the rude eye of rebellion, 293
 And welcome home again discarded faith.
 Seek out king John, and fall before his feet;
 For, if the French be lords of this loud day,
 He means to recompence the pains you take,

By



CYMBELINE.

— take it; and hit
The innocent mansion of my love; my heart.
 428 Scene 4.

Shakespeare, William, / Johnson, Samuel, / Steevens, George,

King John

London 1786

Coburg, Landesbibliothek -- C II 7/31#1

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11919449-9